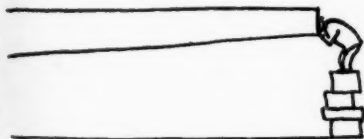




**M**UNICH University students are complaining that the restored university buildings have a gate bearing an inscription "not in keeping with the spirit of the age"—*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*. A suggestion is that *patria* might give way to the substantive *Nato* (-onis).

CANCELLING Dutch airline concessions, Indonesia announced scathingly that it preferred to do business with the Scandinavians, who were "not tainted with colonialism." One or two old Viking families don't know whether to be hurt or flattered.

TESTING new naval guns, the cruiser *Cumberland* has been six months in the Mediterranean and has fired twelve



thousand rounds. It is not known after precisely how many it was decided that the guns would work.

STUDENTS of human nature have been puzzled to notice how frequently, during the course of the Bank Rate inquiry, witnesses have been searchingly questioned on whether stock exchange transactions during the vital period had benefited themselves "or their relatives." Anyone who thinks that a man in the know would rush to tip off his relations must be seriously out of touch with reality.

MR. EISENHOWER's decision to attend the N.A.T.O. conference, coupled with

his reported statement that talk of his resignation is nothing but "misleading claptrap," suggests that he may go down to history as the man who put the nix in Nixon.

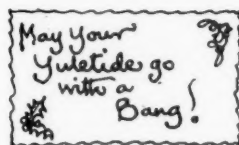
GREAT and historic among Service grumbles, the one about the food seems to have been finally squashed. Perhaps the last in the line of complaints was



made the other day by an airman at Digby who, confronted with seventy-two exotic dishes in the airmen's mess, dithered hopelessly and whined "I don't know which one to choose."

A NOTTINGHAM orchestral conductor was understandably upset when he was warned, in a letter from the Minister of Labour, that he would be liable to be sent to gaol if he invited an Argentine pianist to play Liszt's second piano concerto. Obviously the Minister got his facts wrong, and thought the proposed work was to be Liszt's second Hungarian Rhapsody.

THE U.S. Ambassador in Bonn told a Foreign Press Association meeting: "Someone could walk past this building

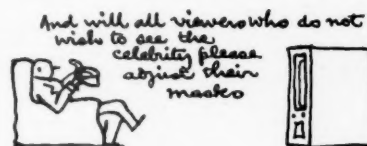


and bury, without anybody knowing it, a nuclear device capable of destroying

the entire Rhine valley." Correspondents present who had not finally decided the form of their Christmas card greetings made a note.

It looks very much as if the public relations officers of coastal resorts are planning their coming campaigns well ahead; already an item has been leaked out to the press about Blackpool's efforts to clean up "mock auctions," and the request by one cleaning-up councillor to be given police protection. Unfortunately, Brighton is still getting bigger coverage with this kind of thing.

THE general feeling about those E.T.U. spokesmen who "daren't show



their faces" on the TV screen is that a few more regular performers might take a tip.

It is reported that after completing a £300,000 technical school for boys at a point equidistant from Bromley and Beckenham, Kent County Council are faced with an "unexpected problem"—how to get the pupils to and from either place. Kent ratepayers feel that this at least confirms the need for a technical school for boys.

### Jolly Good Singers, Though

..... Ah! What avails  
A Minister of State for Wales?  
Can anything persuade the Celt  
His needs are seriously felt,  
Or us that we have any call  
To take him seriously at all?

## Correspondence

## Should Adults See TV?

To the Editor of Punch

DEAR SIR,—I am writing on behalf of the Adult Welfare Society recently formed by children in this neighbourhood to protest about the vicious and sadistic nature of the programmes which the directors of the television authorities regard as suitable for watching by adults.

As an example, I should like to analyse the programmes for one day last week.

To begin with, there were no fewer than six news bulletins on the two channels. These dealt almost exclusively with events of a horrifying or degrading nature. Scenes were described in which senior American officials were tortured by the use of exploding rockets; reports were given of brutal fighting among convicts in a prison; there were starkly-phrased accounts of the callous eviction of harmless Dutch bankers by hostile Indonesians. One particularly horrible passage concerned an affair in which a beautiful blonde girl was said in police court proceedings to have been manhandled by a policeman, while the policeman claimed that the girl's companion had driven a car at him and forced him to climb on to it.

All this terrifying stuff was put out

not once, but several times. The adults in my family listened to it with avidity.

What else were the adults offered?

On Channel 9, after a religious service, they were given glimpses of African natives who appeared almost entirely unclothed. This was followed by an item entitled *Free Speech*; it showed four old men quarrelling with one another for half an hour. A little later came a film, *The Butler's Dilemma*, which, masquerading as a comedy, was concerned with a man who becomes so degraded by debt that he resorts to manual labour of a particularly humiliating kind and subsequently gets mixed up with criminals.

Later in the evening there was a straightforward incitement to gambling in a programme called *Beat the Clock*, followed by an American film about forgery, a play in which the hero was shown as making a series of fraudulent claims, and a "disc-jockey" programme where various singing "stars," obviously with intent to deceive, pretended to be performing popular songs while a glib interlocutor, having distracted viewers' attention with a series of farcical expedients, had their records played on an electric reproducer.

It is hard to think of a sin from one end of the decalogue to the other that was not either committed or implied before the eyes of these hapless adults, who sat with their gazes glued to the television screen almost continuously throughout the day.

On the B.B.C. things were not much better.

There the adults were regaled with the ruthless cutting down of chrysanthemums, the dissemination of heterodox opinions by a so-called "brains trust," an interview with a monk at an abbey where it is notorious that alcoholic liquor is prepared, and an account of a journey the sole object of which appears to have been to capture and incarcerate wild birds.

Is it any wonder that our adults are getting to be more and more bad-tempered and nervy?

It is all very well to laugh off this situation by saying that most adults have become conditioned to programmes of this kind and rendered immune to

them by long habituation. The fact is that the children's programmes on which they are brought up are quite a different matter and do not really provide any great measure of immunity.

In the first place, they are for the most part adaptations of stories such as *Robin Hood* and *The Last of the Mohicans*, which we children know perfectly well are not true. This is not the case with most of the programmes directed at adults. In the worst case of all, the terrifying and debasing news bulletins, every possible step is taken to emphasize the fact that they *are* true. We know that when an Indian is shot by Chingachgook and bites the dust, he is really only pretending and the dust is nothing more than sawdust provided by the studio technicians.

But when adults are shown pictures of Cypriots and British fighting—with much more brutality than we ever get even in *The Last of the Mohicans*—it is dinned into them that this is *really happening*.

Adults do not possess the same indifference to suffering which characterizes children, and are apt to be disturbed even by comparatively trivial things like cans tied to the tails of dogs. How much more likely are they to suffer, then, when their heads are stuffed with this endless vista of horrors.

The remedy is a comparatively simple one, if only the broadcasting authorities are ready to display sufficient public spirit.

The time allotted for broadcasting to adults should be drastically curtailed. One hour's television per evening is more than enough for a normal adult. Horrific programmes such as news bulletins, variety shows and interviews with Woodrow Wyatt should be banned for ever from our screens.

The extra time made available should be filled by extending the Children's Hours. I am sure that enough good clean juvenile material such as *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Gun Law* and *This is Your Life* must be available to make it possible to run the children's programmes from four-thirty till ten-thirty every day.

Yours, etc.,  
PUERFAMILIAS



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FAMILIAS



A TASK FOR HERCULES



# Notes for My Literary Executor

By TOM GIRTIN

"Lot 20. OSTRICH EGG painted and lacquered with scenes from the Khamasa of Nizami. (i) Layla and Majnun; (ii) Bahram Gur hunting; (iii) Shirin visiting Farhad at Mount Behistun; (iv) Bahram Gur watching his discarded mistress carry a cow up a ladder ('Practice makes perfect'). Modern Persian."

(Catalogue of Western and Oriental MSS)

THAT's the trouble with maxims: they reveal the character, as old Vauvenargues has it—though I'm not quite sure what aspect of old Vauvenargues' own character that particular *Réflexion* reveals. Certainly Bahram Gur doesn't emerge as the sort of character in which I should care to appear at Sotheby's on an Ostrich Egg. To my way of thinking there is something rather caddish about a man who will sit—or even stand in his hunting clothes for all I know, for I haven't seen this Egg—and complacently watch the little woman's struggles.

"After all we have meant to each other," I can hear her cry, "I do think you might give me a hand with this cow." And while she tries to disentangle the dexter horn from between the rungs with one hand and hold on to the ladder and the beast with the other, Bahram Gur just sits and smiles with all the enigmatic devilry of the Orient.

As a matter of fact he can hardly wait to see what happens when she gets to the top of the ladder.

"Oh, go on! Be a sport!" pleads his discarded mistress.

"Practice makes perfect," says B. Gur, revealingly, with an odious smile.

For the benefit of the biographer seeking amongst my hoarded papers, which are hardly less extensive than the Malahide Trove, for revealing influences in my literary life I am prepared to state quite frankly that I owe it all to four maxims. As I traced those fateful phrases laboriously and with the ink creeping unbidden over the tender pad of my index finger and along the inside surface of its neighbour, in a copy-book inscribed on the cover "Tommy, Summer Term 1919," little did I reckon how their subtle influence was being distilled in my infant brain.

*Xenophon was a Greek*

The X with its volutes and sweeping down curves I found particularly satisfying. Later when first Virgil and then Percy F. Westerman taught me to beware all Greeks, Xenophon became my literary symbol for everything that

was untrustworthy. I mention this because it will explain the many fragments among my Juvenilia which contain some such passage as:

"With an evil leer Xenophon slid back the secret panel . . ." or "At the sight of the Mannlicher glinting in the British lad's hands Xenophon's olive complexion turned a ghastly shade of grey. His eyes bulged. 'Do not me shoot!' he gasped cravenly."

*There are no snakes in Ireland*

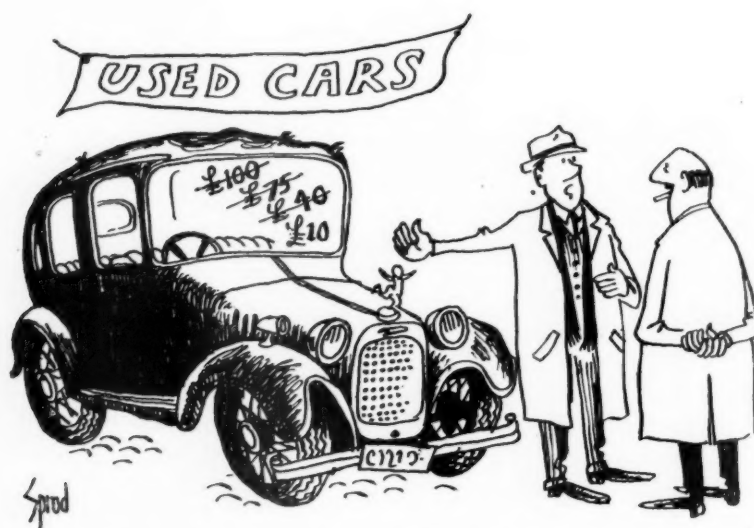
This still represents almost my entire stock of knowledge in the field of herpetology. I connect it obscurely in my mind with the incident when Saint Patrick caused the sole to be for ever a flat fish after it had laughed at the shape of his feet while he was paddling—a doubtful example of Christian charity, by the way. Literary researchers will find the influence of the maxim among my pre-war short stories—with a twist:

"How did I know that he was lying?" Inspector Gallowglass smiled grimly as he closed the file with an air of finality. "There are no snakes in Ireland."

*Share your luck*

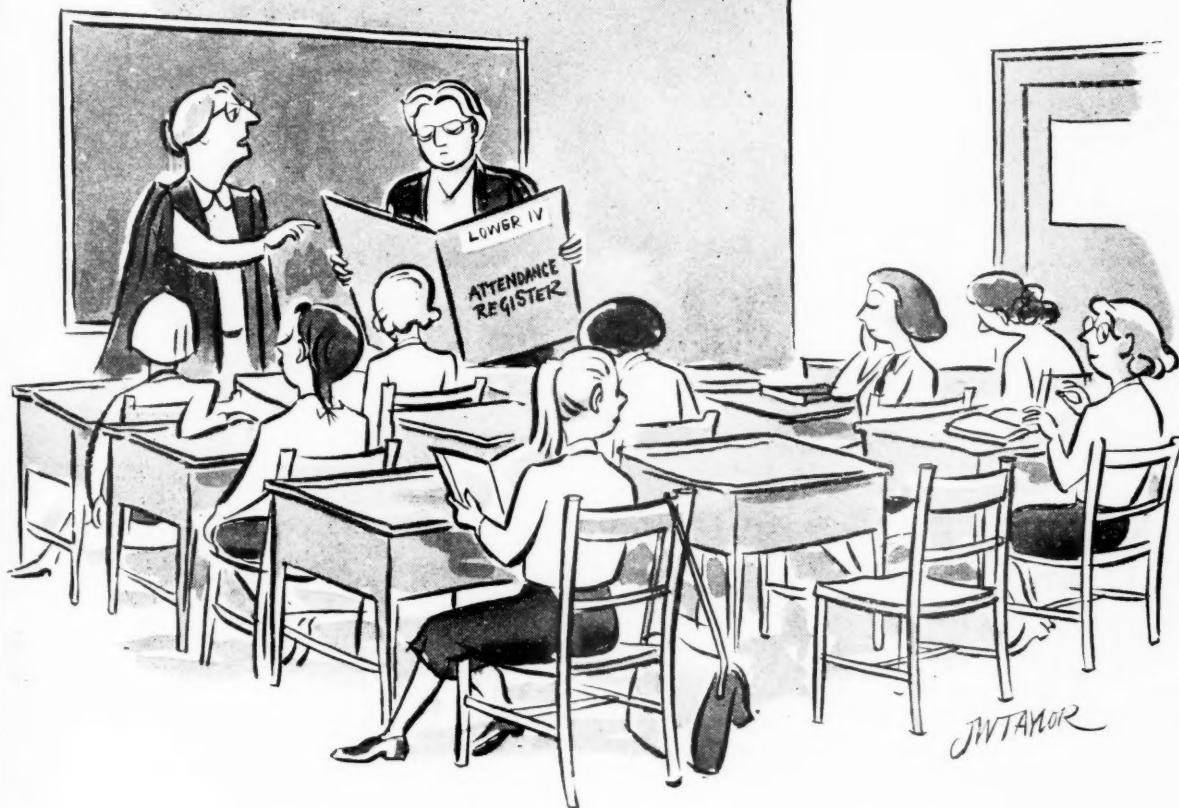
There was, as I was soon to learn at my prep-school, very little opportunity to do otherwise. Two boys would approach the duty master and say "Please, sir, may we make out a Stodge-List, sir, oh, please, sir, yes, sir?" and would then go round collecting orders and cash. Going down to the village shop they would return with at least two carrier bags full of packets of marshmallows, Turkish delight, whipped-cream walnuts, chocolate cream, gobstoppers, aniseed balls, lemonade-powder to be licked from the palm of the hand, and sherbet to be sucked from its container through a liquorice tube.

"St—o—dge List!" they would shout like coalmen along a London terrace. As each boy collected his order he was marked down and surrounded



"Would you mind rubbing out the price?—it's for a present."





*"Three absent with 'flu, one having a novel launched, and two swimming for England."*

by a horde of his less-favoured fellows, as persistent and as cunning as Mediterranean beggars, all crying out "Decent chap!" There was no unhealthy element of toadying in the words: they merely expressed a demand positively stated. If the parasites were smaller than their intended host, or felt themselves in other ways inferior, the words might be used as a question: "Decent chap?" They could be used, too, as a verb: "No! Face off! I decent chapped you last week." "Oh, stinge! Go on, Gertie, I'll decent chap you next Stodge List—stinge, stinge, stinge!"

All this was of course invaluable training for life in a Welfare State; and students will no doubt be able to trace to it the calm fatalism of my later, more mature work.

### *Hack no Furniture*

Adherence to this wholesome maxim

is entirely responsible for the cryptic entry in my War Diary which historians may otherwise find inexplicable:

*"5th January 1941. Fog. V. Cold. Arrived Billets too late to save Grinling Gibbons chimney-piece. (Chopped for Officers' Mess). Saved part of William Kent staircase. Delivered Georgian Group homily. Gunner Baggs on Charge (Dumb Insolence). Supper: Baked beans sur toast."*

### *Practice makes perfect*

This is nearly where we came in, though having practised the piano for many years I do not include it among the maxims of my life. I began at the age of six with a *morceau* entitled "*Le Coucou (The Cuckoo)*" and as with increasing age mind, muscle and keyboard became less and less co-ordinated I found I was as far as ever from

playing the Cuckoo without a sense of unease that wrought havoc with my phrasing. At the age of seventeen I was allowed to take up the triangle and I wiped "Practice makes Perfect" off my list. Bahram Gur will be well advised to do the same: however long she practises, his discarded mistress is never going to feel really at home with that load on a ladder.

"SPIKE MILLIGAN . . . HARRY SECOMBE and PETER SELLERS, in tail coats and topers . . . What was this Goonapatra's Needle stuff all about, I asked? The Goons explained that they have a new theory on how the Needle came to Britain, which they will expound in a special B.B.C. Home Service programme . . . Yesterday they were getting local colour . . ."

*Cleopatra's Needle was a gift from Egypt to Britain and was towed here in a special iron container in 1878 . . ."*

*Daily Mirror*

That was too funny to use, of course.

# The Thurber Shore: *A party episode to celebrate the publication of "Alarms and Diversions."*

By RICHARD MALLET

"THE frustrations of the literary humorist in England," said this man, whose accent made a deeper bow eastwards than West Cornwall, Connecticut, but without acknowledgment, "are not unconnected with the fact that our women, as compared with yours, are in a position of authority less spotlight, less honestly admitted by the shrinking male."

I had heard his name as Dr. Millmoss, but that now seemed not so easy to believe, although a hippopotamus was accessible (we were quite near the Zoo). He looked as stern as a swan, his head was sunk in a loose wide collar like Beethoven's, and he was drinking, of course, Scotch.

So was I. I shifted my position slightly and said "I wonder if you are mistaking me for James Thurber?"

He saw my point, and said it was really his. "It is the new book," he went on, "on which I base my thesis. It conveniently sums up the Thurber oeuvre."

I knew that besides being an uneasy husband he had to be either a literary critic or a psychiatrist, because they always are unless the scene is Columbus, Ohio, and I was glad to find out which so soon. Besides, there was no room to lie down.

"In this collection, which covers twenty years but includes some pieces never in book form before—"

"One-third of the text," I said, for I had seen the book too.

"Precisely—there are at least four," Dr. Millmoss said, "of this most characteristically Thurber kind. The subject of the wary antagonism between men and women, which the master has made so uncomfortably his own, is treated in all but one of these pieces only by implication, but it is there. It is here."

"Your wife is with you?"

"My wife takes little interest in such routs as this," said Dr. Millmoss. "I understood her to say she was going to the Zoo. She likes the hippopotamus. It is true that by this time she might have been expected . . ." He looked at his watch, and up again. It seems quite certain that his name can't have been Dr. Millmoss, but I have to call him something.

"But the point about these pieces," he went on, after drinking a little, "is that they are essentially dramatized opinion, in the form—if you will pardon a quotation from the introductory remarks, by whom I cannot remember, to one volume of the collected edition of the works of Saki—in the form of monologue judiciously fed."

I gave a small nod, and snatched a cheese straw. "Pocket-sized dark blue books," I told him, feeding us both.

"And at one unpredictable but inevitable point the interlocutor, or feed, is moved to *snarl*," said Dr. Millmoss.

He stared expectantly at me, but a man who looked like Bolenciewicz, the Ohio State tackle, came up and tried to start a conversation about the assonance of time, and the much more noticeable assonance of *Time*. When he had been removed by a short, rectangular girl carrying a glass of milk, Dr. Millmoss said "Let me return to my earlier observation. What help does the English humorous writer get from his female characters? Their function is no more than decorative. All, down to those in the successful light comedy, are typified by the mischievous niece as seen by the dashing middle-aged uncle. They do not dominate and earn their passage in the plot; they hang around and giggle. Even supposing one had room . . ."



He paused and gave a fleeting sigh, treading an ice-cube into the carpet with bitter emphasis.

"And that, I may observe," he said, "is another point worthy of envious reference. We have not mentioned Henry James, or Paris, or nineteenth-century American history, or drawing, or, above all, dogs. If this were for American publication, we could go on—"

I got in my snarl here. "You could go on," I snarled.

"On," the doctor compromised, dropping ash into his trouser-cuff, "for two thousand words or more; as it is, we have to stop before setting a tremulous foot on the far boundary of even one. Ah, that unattainable Thurber shore!"

A tall lady approached us, and Dr. Millmoss started. "How was the Zoo?" he asked in a tone suddenly reedy and uncertain.

The tall lady looked sidewise at me, and said "Now, Edward, you're mistaking me for Alice again." She gave a sharp look at his glass, wanly inspected his tie, and gently prised a cigar-butt from between the fingers of his left hand. "He meant the further shore," she said to me as she withdrew.

"The Thurber shore," he growled, staring at the too-emphatic swirl of her retreating skirt. "But now I have to sum up. There is nobody to touch Thurber in the nice conduct of a clouded sentence; but his real importance is that, in the old curiosity shop to which the forlorn manœuvres—I should say manœuvres—of the nuclear scientist are so rapidly reducing our temporary planet, he sounds," said Dr. Millmoss, striking his glass courteously against another as he put it down, "a little knell."

The rest was silence (and quite a rest it was).

"A miniature tool kit in a pigskin holder the size of a lipstick case has all the gadgets a man could want (12s. 6d.). Five attachments, including a gimlet, chisel and blade for removing tacks or even the proverbial stone from a horse's hoof fit into a solid steel two-piece handle. (Miss Beaumont tested this on boy friends and reports it kept them quiet for hours.) *Daily Telegraph*

If not for ever.



"And what are you doing here, Susan?"



# Away and Home

By VERNON JOHNSON

"GET out of your rut," they said. "It's deeper than you think. Broaden your horizon. Get in touch with the world again." "Oh, very well," I said. "Leave us the key so that we can feed the cats," they said. "The key disappeared eight years ago," I said. "In the time of my poltergeist." "Never mind, never mind," they said. "There's nothing worth stealing here anyway." "There's a couple of million daffodils and Partridge's *Dictionary of Slang*," I said. "Be off with you," they said.

When I got back the daffodils were dead and the roses after them, and there were considerably more cats. "Well?" they said. "Horizon a bit broader? In touch with things, eh? *Au fait* with the *avant-garde*, and so on? Tell us all. How was Dublin?"

"In Davy Byrne's a feckful customer

railed at mankind in general for o'ver an hour. To me. His life work, he told me, is to provide colouring stuff for meat-extracts, gravies, coffee-preparations, mineral waters and whisky, and much, surprisingly much else, besides. And the public dotes on brown, laps up brown, must, simply must have brown. A light shade of mahogany is far and away his best-selling dye. 'Sad, sad, sad,' he insisted. 'Oh, how sad! What can you do with a world full of people like that? And it's one thing you can't blame on the Russians.' This was in answer to my inquiry as to the best way of getting to Sackville Street. Anything much been happening in the village?"

"Bird-watching has taken such a hold on the blacksmith that he's selling up and going off to try to get a job as

keeper in a lighthouse. What about Paris?"

"Scooterism has reached such proportions that it is striking at the very foundations of the *Tour de France*. This year's winner of the tour was described in *Figaro* by my friend Jean Fayard as 'the Françoise Sagan of the velocipedic world.' Also the wife of a French diplomat told me that once at a reception she actually fainted from boredom and nothing but boredom. Fainted clean away. Bonk!—just like that. How's local politics?"

"The Parish Council is split from top to bottom and there's been the ritual fisticuffs. This time it's over the official spelling of the river. Whether it should be the 'Tamlin' or the 'Temlynn.' How was the South?"

"But surely it's never been known as anything else but 'the river,' has it? The South? Le Vigan is not at all like its Lancashire namesake except that it too—according to my 1914 *Baedeker*, although I did not myself see any—has coal-mines. Then I was wondering and wondering in Montpellier why the *Boulevard des Bonnes Nouvelles* is so called when I came upon a plaque in the wall which announced 'The gratitude of the burghers of Montpellier to Joan of Arc for the good news of the relief of Orleans from the English.' And Nîmes is far more thumpingly Calvinist than I had ever realized. I found a small temple over an ironmonger's shop. It was 'The Tabernacle of the Jealous God.' How's dear old Tregaswith getting on?"

"Broke his arm about a month ago. He swore he'd get the fox that had been killing his goslings. Sat up in a tree with a 12-bore all night, but he dozed, dropped off and down. As well as his arm he bent that big hip-flask of his beyond repair. Did you meet any famous people?"

"Good lord, no! Oh yes. Sorry. Yes I did. I helped Francis Poulenc to unravel the cord of a very old Provençal lark-lure—a circumstance that can have befallen few Englishmen of my generation and station in life. What's the cricket been like?"

"The Cricket Club has decided to insist on beards. If you want a game next season you'll have to grow one. It's all to do with Charity in some obscure way. Did you find Oxford much changed?"





*"I understand Fifi has express orders from the Quai d'Orsay to explain the French point of view to the American delegation."*

"There are many fewer tricycles about than there used to be, and there is now no telling which are undergraduates except for the gowns of course. The 10.45 p.m. from Paddington is called, these days, the 10.45 from Paddington. No other news?"

"Yes. Your water supply doesn't work any more. How did you get on in London?"

"In a skiffle-alley I met a man with the same name as myself and he revealed to me that I have no fewer than five mottoes to choose from, according to

the branch of the family I might belong to. 'These are 'The Day Will Dawn,' 'Ready for War,' 'I Owe All to God and the King,' 'Ever Thus' and 'Let Nothing You Astonish.' This is only four fewer, the man said, than the range of choice of the Smiths. You really mean it about the water?"

They meant it all right. My water supply consists of a dammed-up spring and close on half a mile of 1½-inch iron piping jointed together at irregular intervals by slices of bicycle inner-tube. It took me the better part of a day to

dismantle the system and locate the blockage which was in a section of pipe too long to be prodded by even the tallest willow-wand available. In the end I had to take a hacksaw and cut this length in half. Upon which, out shot a fine and vigorous eel which I managed to secure and later stewed gently in a fennel-dominated court bouillon for my supper. Travel is all very well in its way and there are undoubtedly many fine things to see and to hear outside one's own parish. But you do miss home cooking.

## THE NEW MAYHEW—



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## —TWO STREET BOYS



WILL now set out some replies I received from two boys, whom I questioned upon general topics. The mother of the first lad assured me that he was a good enough son at home, being but seldom there save to sleep, and had rarely threatened her. He had attended school until the age of fifteen, when he was expelled for proposing to stab a student teacher with a clasp knife. It has not been his fault. He was now aged seventeen, and worked from time to time "on the buildings." [I assumed he was a labourer of some kind.] He earned but little, for he was able to give her only five or six pounds each week towards his keep. Nevertheless, she told me, he managed somehow like a good son to provide his own curious garments, long-playing gramophone records, petrol, and other necessities. His father had been killed at the wars. [Recalling her husband, she was much affected, explaining that he had been a good, straight man at all times, by trade a milk-roundsman; an upright man who feared God and died in a strange land where they would not let her go, as she put it, to sit beside his bed and be with him. She gave it as her opinion, albeit with some hint of anxiety in her expression, that he would have been proud of his son.]

This lad was of a somewhat gipsy aspect, having elaborate sideburns and the coiffure of a woman. His face was as pale as tallow, his demeanour surly. I observed too that his costume appeared partly historical and partly that of a humble worker in rural America. He told me that he thought the name of the Prime Minister at present was Winston, but wasn't too sure, and what did it matter? No, he knew nothing of a Prime Minister's duties and cared less. So far as he knew he had never been in a church; thought "Jesus and all like that" was probably "all right for old women and that"; did not believe in God; was C. of E.; and had read much of the Bible at school, including, as he assured me with a sly look, "the dirty bits and all." He could name three continents: England,

the Middle East, and Australia, although he was not certain of the last named. He had heard of fractions; they were used in sums. He could recite the words of eighteen popular ditties, and did so, insisting that they were all word perfect, which I was not disposed to doubt. He could think of only two English poets: Longfellow and George Washington. No, he was not satisfied with his present employment. Who was? Asked what he would rather do, he said he thought he would like to be "something where you can shove people around and knock off early." He unashamedly gave as his chief ambition "To come up on the Pools." Having achieved that, he said, he would live in an hotel and "have two different women every night."

He had never seen a play; didn't want to, not unless there was dancing and that. Had heard of Sir Laurence Olivier, thought he conducted a band. Could write and spell well enough to suit himself, don't you worry. Liked "X" films, wished there were more. Could tell me three English counties (Wales, Sussex and Birmingham). Easily identified a list of twelve names which I read out to him, all connected with the cruder sort of popular entertainment. Knew Aneurin Bevan; he was a long-distance runner. Would never really use his knife, but had once kicked a young lady in the stomach outside a dance-hall, and would again. He told me that the Channel Tunnel ran under the Mersey at Manchester.

As with many of his kind, his most notable characteristic was a doleful apathy, without even the spark of cynicism to give it liveliness; for, upon my advising him of the *correct* answer to each of the questions, he would invariably inquire "So what?" Occasionally he would entreat me further, and with vehemence, to "do him a favour," without once specifying its nature; and indeed I would have been glad to render whatever assistance lay in my power; for surely, if the State can take no steps to allay the spread of such brutishness in the young who prowl our streets, then it must remain for the individual to do what little he can in opening their eyes to the realities of the world. It is inconceivable that some

small measure of civilization will not eventually reach these islands. We must pray that it arrive in time.

The second boy was aged twenty. By contrast, he had a cheeky cast of countenance, although his loose jaw and vacant eye betokened an equally lamentable shallowness of character. He was employed, he told me, as a salesman in a street market, but had "other interests." He was incapable of standing still; for he would twist his body constantly, snapping his fingers and jerking his head as in some primitive ritual. No, his father was not dead, but was a very small man. Certainly he had read books; some that would make my hair curl, he wasn't kidding. [Here he laughed.] No, he had never heard of Somerset Maugham, and didn't want to, much. No, nor Brahms, either. He sometimes bought a newspaper, if a photograph on the cover took his fancy. He had an idea Picasso was a Russian footballer, but couldn't be sure. No, he never watched television; it was all muck, a waste of time. Cinemas were all right; in the cinema you could . . . [Here he spoke obscenely.] He believed politics were what they did in Parliament, where Big Ben was. He had no ambition, that he could bring to mind. "What's the use, if the whole b——y world's going to get blew up any minute?" He would regard himself as fortunate if he could live to be forty without having to get married, pay income tax, join the Army, or get *nicked* for doing a *fiddle*. "Nobody can't expect no more out of life, Dad, not these days. So what are you looking so —— miserable about?"

They seemed a lively enough pair, for as I moved away they laughingly seized a young lady of their acquaintance who passed by, pulling her into the doorway of a shop.

ALEX ATKINSON

Next Week:

An Actress of Advancing Years

§ §

"A hock awaited members of the Church Assembly when it resumed in London today, writes a reporter."—*Lincolnshire Echo*

Any abstentions?

# Manhunt, Monuments and Menus

By R. G. G. PRICE

THE children were asleep all right but their parents, instead of plunging into London night life, were sitting gloomily in an hotel lounge that seemed to have been designed by one whose usual line was hymnbook covers. On a table was a trough of books, mostly too large for it. They rejected several volumes intended to help travellers in pre-war Europe; then Gilda picked out the fifth edition of Muirhead's *Blue Guide to England* and Henry found the *Good Food Guide for 1955-56*.

"Let's write one of those thrillers that live off their frills, Henry. The hero shoots a member of a black-mailing gang in Aylesbury while he is looking at Lord Beaconsfield's statue."

"Then he lunches at Aston Clinton on Pheasant Smitane and Vesuvius Omelet. The gang gain on him and he dodges off to Hurley for the Goujon de Homard. I suppose it would have to be a fish tea. If he dawdled till dinner he might get caught."

"He could skulk in the remains of the Benedictine Priory. Of course it

depends a bit on how far the remains remain. He'd better head for a big town. He'd be less conspicuous. Did I mention that he's six-foot-six? Oxford, I think. If he gets bored with colleges he can try to get into the Clarendon Press. He won't, though, because he hasn't thought of writing to the printer for an order."

"I agree to Oxford, but only for its Shashlik Garni. He hides in the back of a long-distance truck and lands at Topsham, which is lucky because he adores Sacher Torte."



"It's the hit of London and New York and it's about three or four people who live in a whole garret all to themselves and actually own an electric clothes-iron with which the wife presses her husband's innumerable shirts and they're constantly fighting amid this clutter of pots and pans, newspapers, food and tobacco, and the point of it seems to be that wealth can't buy happiness."

"I like the sound of Topsham. It is partly built in Dutch style of Dutch bricks. We can work in memories of Holland. The gang soon pick up his trail; a chase from Oxford to South Devon is nothing to them. Do they drive him across the moors? You can't have a thriller without moors."

"Yes. He ends up, poor footsore fugitive, in Dulverton, where he recovers on Red Exmoor Deer and Somerset Clotted Cream. Then he climbs under some sacks in a goods train and it goes for hours and hours and he finds himself in Wolverhampton. He doesn't really mind because he has a passion for Cassoulet Toulousain and Snails."

"That's not my picture of Wolverhampton. The so-called Dane's Cross, once associated with the defeat of the Danes near Tettenhall, is now regarded as Norman work of the late twelfth century. He has put off his visit too long."

"He hitch-hikes to Conder Green, having a laughable encounter with some comic relief on the way, and there he eats Bouchées Chasseur, apparently in the company of linoleum magnates. The gang, who have local allies, put the heat on and it is only with the help of a vicar who lets him borrow a cassock as a disguise that he reaches Sedbergh. Otherwise he would have missed Bilberry Tart and lashings of cream. A recommendation from what the *Guide* calls 'A learned and allusive member' begins 'Est! Est! Est!' The service, by the way, is by orphans. After a night's sleep on a roof he is ready for local lobsters and game shot by the host at Bamburgh."

"Muirhead says Besant's *Dorothy Forster* should be read at Bamburgh. That might mean a longish stay and tension would die down. I think he ought to be heading back. He has left a time-bomb in London and but for the intervention of the gang he would have had plenty of time to collect it and switch it off. Now he gets worried about the way the days are passing. I think he should work south to Nottingham, at least, for the night. He can have soothing memories of Byron, Bonington and Marshall Tallard, who taught allotment-gardening to the citizens."

"They probably grew Balkan herbs to flavour the Mousaka, Kebabs,

Kioftedes and Suvlakia. The *Guide's* term for this cookery is 'Unpretentious.' What about a mad morning of hair-breadth escapes ending for lunch at Berkswell?—Half a Wild Duck in Red Wine sauce and Tyrolean Serenaders. I never thought of Warwickshire as being like that."

"There are Norman and Saxon crypts. They can be the site of sinister by-play. Can the enemy just miss trapping him at Long Melford? The main street is two miles long and the Church has a detached Lady Chapel and contains memorials of the Cloptons."

"Much more important, Long Melford is a town that really *understands* Butterscotch-pie. I think it is time he falls into the enemy's hands. He must get tortured, to bring in the Ian Fleming public, but he can make a break that brings him to Royston: Golden Plover and choice of twelve sherries."

"The hooded crow is said never to winter south of Royston. I'm not quite sure whether that's in the town's favour or not. Anyway, there's a curious cave under the street near the post office. He can have another encounter with comic relief about here."

"Make it Dunstable, because the steaks there are more imaginative than you would expect in Bedfordshire."

"A very good reason. I know, the comic relief can be leaning on a wall and gazing at the ruins of the Priory where Cranmer pronounced sentence of divorce on Catharine of Aragon."

"The final scene ought to be in London. He lures the gang into following him into Scotland Yard by a back door, collects his time-bomb and resets it and ends up eating Trout in Aspic in Leicester Square."

"You brute. I can't find it. Oh, I see.



There's a separate volume for London. Pennant called Leicester Square 'The pouting-place of princes.' The waiter can mention it to the hero."

"This character is going to catch on. I can feel it. Give me Muirhead and you take the Food. Now we'll do the sequel."

"Looking up from his Wild Duck and Orange Sauce at Boughton Aluph, he sees a man he thought he had left for dead . . ."

"Looking up from trying to find Boughton Aluph, I can see it's time to check on the children," said Henry.

For-the Last-Minute Present—

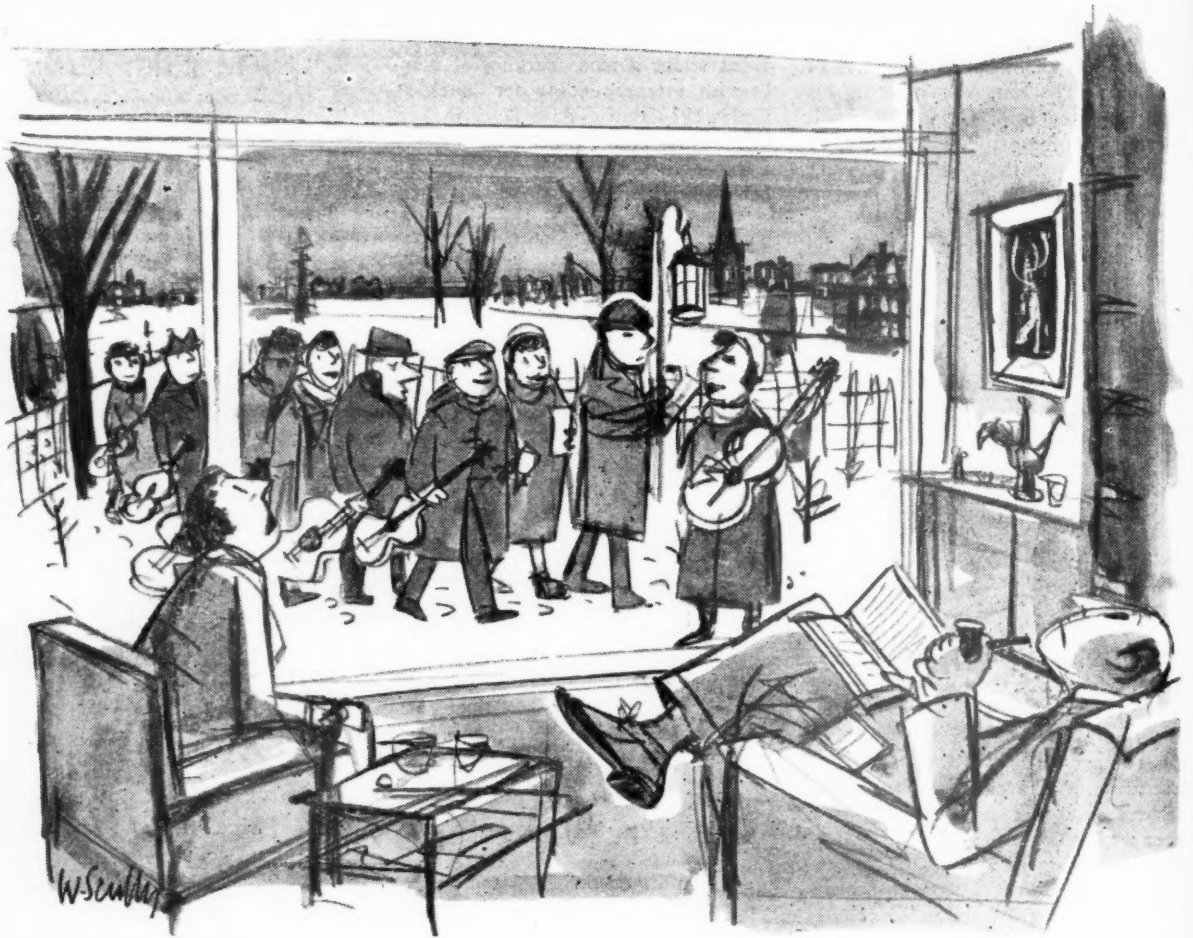
### Send PUNCH this Christmas

No need to rush to the shops this last pre-Christmas Saturday; nor pack presents in frantic haste and faith in the speed of the post; nor fuss with string and bits of decorated paper. Save time and temper . . . SEND PUNCH FOR A YEAR, simply by sending £2 16s. (or 28s. for six months) to PUNCH, Dept. PS, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

To speed things up even more we will send an attractive Greetings Card to your friends immediately, announcing your gift . . . then PUNCH every Wednesday, carrying your kind thoughts through the year ahead.

But please send your order Now!





## Candidus Watches Football

By LORD KINROSS

**E**LBOWING and jostling forward, the crowd poured excitedly out of the train, then at a trot stampeded along the subway and up into the street. Mobbing the turnstiles impatiently, it swarmed into the stands, where it stood closely massed, all a-buzz with talk and agog with anticipation as to what might lie ahead. Candidus, when he had a moment to breathe, remarked "The English, it seems, are a very excitable people."

"Certainly. You have not observed it before?"

"Frankly no. I had regarded them as a strong silent race."

"In matters unreal to them perhaps. Daily life, for example. Or politics. Or war. Or entertainment. But this, you will appreciate, is a truly important

occasion. That is why they are excited."

"A game of association football is then a serious occasion?"

"This alone. Games are real, games are earnest. They are the English equivalent of life."

Since he first came to England I have tried to show Candidus different manifestations of sport. During the summer I took him to a cricket match, at which his attention wandered a little.

"It will be over soon?" he inquired.

"Well, in two or three days."

"Days? In my country such games last no more than two or three hours."

"In your country you are in too much of a hurry."

Looking back at the players he remarked "But most of the time they

are strolling about, doing nothing. From one end of the pitch to the other."

"That is part of the game. These are called overs."

"Always, it seems, the game is over. Even when it is not, they often do not even try to hit the ball."

"That is part of the game too."

"It is then a form of leisure—a rest for those who play it?"

"No. It is a form of art. The English, you must be aware, are a very artistic people."

I tried to open his eyes to some of the finer stylistic points of the infrequent but graceful strokes with the bat. But at that moment the players broke off and strolled in to tea.

"They seem to eat many meals during their games," he remarked.

"Of course. Even artists must eat."

Candidus started to scribble down sums on his score card, and at the end of the day said "I have calculated that during all these six hours your ball has been in play only for some ninety minutes."

"Wait till you see a rugger match," I said.

So when the season opened I took him to Twickenham. Looking around the stands he commented "I see very few ladies present."

"Ladies, to the Englishman, are neither very real nor very earnest."

"But I see one important-looking lady, there in the centre of the stand."

"She is the French Ambassadors."

Candidus seemed at first to enjoy the game, but he soon grew impatient.

"At this game too," he said, "the players are always resting."

"Resting?"

"They are always kicking the ball out, which gives them a rest."

"That is part of the game."

"So it seems. Also they run very slowly. The man with the ball, he is always having to throw it backwards, as no one has caught up with him. And they waste a lot of time huddling together in that way. Is this football or wrestling?"

"That is the scrum."

"Now a player has stolen the ball from the scrum and another one is attacking him. He was inattentive. He should have attacked him before he could get at the ball. There now, he has run away with it, right off the ground. Now they will rest again, I suppose."

But he became alert when a whistle blew and a man was revealed lying prone, face downwards, on the turf. "Do you see?" he exclaimed in excitement. "One of the players has killed another."

But the man soon rose, and Candidus again lost interest. He started to do sums again, and at the end remarked "I calculate that in seventy minutes your ball has been in play for not more than thirty."

Now, however, here we were at the Arsenal ground, with the crowd murmuring, and then roaring, and then yelling insults, and all the time waving rattles, at which Candidus at first exclaimed in alarm "Machine-guns!"

The white ball sped from one end of the field to the other, from head to head

and, by a sequence of swift and intricate movements, from foot to foot, the players dodging and nudging and sidling at one another, and the goalkeeper flinging himself into the air like a man on a flying trapeze. I called Candidus's attention to the swiftness and grace of the game.

"This then is a kind of ballet?" he asked.

"The Englishman's sport is his art, as I have told you."

"The choreography seems skilful, and the cast highly trained."

"Yes. They are dedicated to this sport."

"Certainly they do not seem to require to rest all the time, like those other players. They are well paid, like ballet-dancers?"

"Scarcely."

The lights went up, shining down on the arena and flinging dramatic shadows around the players cavorting before the television cameras. The excitement of the audience rose to a fever pitch. They waved flags, chanted incantations, roared praise and abuse. Taking in the scene, Candidus remarked "I understand. This is your National Theatre."

"In a sense yes. We certainly have no other."

"18 Labour M.P.s have signed a Commons motion to stop U.S. planes patrolling over Britain with hydrogen bombs. It is a 'panic measure,' they say . . ."

*Daily Herald*

Frank of them.



"Now this year couldn't we leave out the Malenkovs, Molotovs and Zhukovs?"

# Sahara Plan

By CLAUD COCKBURN



THE time has come to celebrate the genius of a British citizen whose bright, constructive brain makes anything Khrushchev can do look like a run around the lamp-post with Fido.

Furthermore, a quiet appraisal of his achievement—supposing anyone is still mentally capable of making a quiet appraisal of anything at all, a point upon which I would be glad to gather considered opinions—tends to show that anything we think we can do grandpa thought he could almost certainly do better. (Grandpa did not, it goes without saying, actually foresee us, but he must, poor old fellow, have had a rough idea. That was the thing that soured grandpa towards the end.)

Therefore we speak now in high praise of Donald Mackenzie who, as long ago as the year 1875, showed a way forward, which, had it been followed, would have stopped all this North African trouble in its tracks, saved France, saved civilization, and saved Timbuctoo.

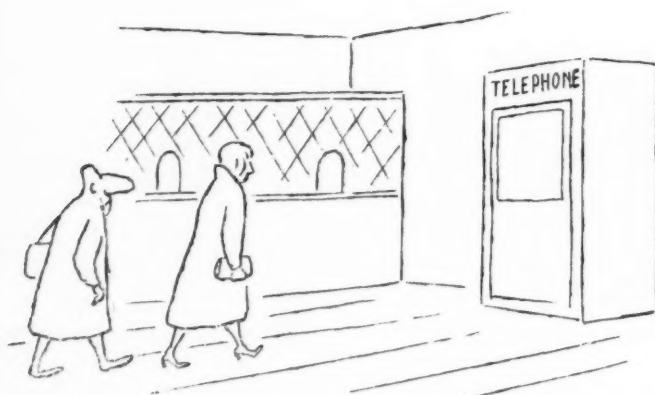
The idea he had was no small one. It was, quite simply, to cut a hole in the Atlantic coast of north-west Africa—near where Ifni now flourishes—and let the Atlantic into the Sahara. We must more than ever reverence the memory of Mackenzie because he is the type of scientist and thinker who is dying out. Nowadays they vaunt their supposed—though unproved—ability to kill eight million people in less than three minutes flat, but when asked to make the obvious gesture of at least producing a

looking-glass in which a man can shave in a bathroom without the whole miserable surface misting over until wiped off ultimately by the streaming blood of the victim, they stand non-plussed, and in Paris *interloqués*.

No so Mackenzie. What did he see? He saw a huge great desert. What else did he see? He saw a huge great ocean. What was his reaction to these geographically concatenated facts? It was the decent, common-sense reaction of the decent common-sense man. Tip the wet bit into the dry bit, said Mackenzie, and there'll be a general improvement.

The French—then, as now, tetchy and individualistic, also had an idea for flooding the Sahara. But would they go along with the British conception? Oh dear no. Not at all. They wanted to go at the thing from the wrong, or Latin end, and let the Mediterranean in from the Gulf of Gabes. Characteristically, one is sorry to have to report, they became involved in an internal row—the Burgundy wine-growers' lobby opposed the scheme on the ground that it would wreck the climate of Burgundy. M. de Lesseps went on record with a statement to the contrary. In fact he even went to the extent of saying that the flooding of the Sahara—he referred to a Franco-flood rather than an Anglo-flood—would positively benefit the climate of France.

But de Lesseps was on the losing end. And it was the London *Daily Telegraph* of April 2, 1875, which—with intelligible pride, told him so.



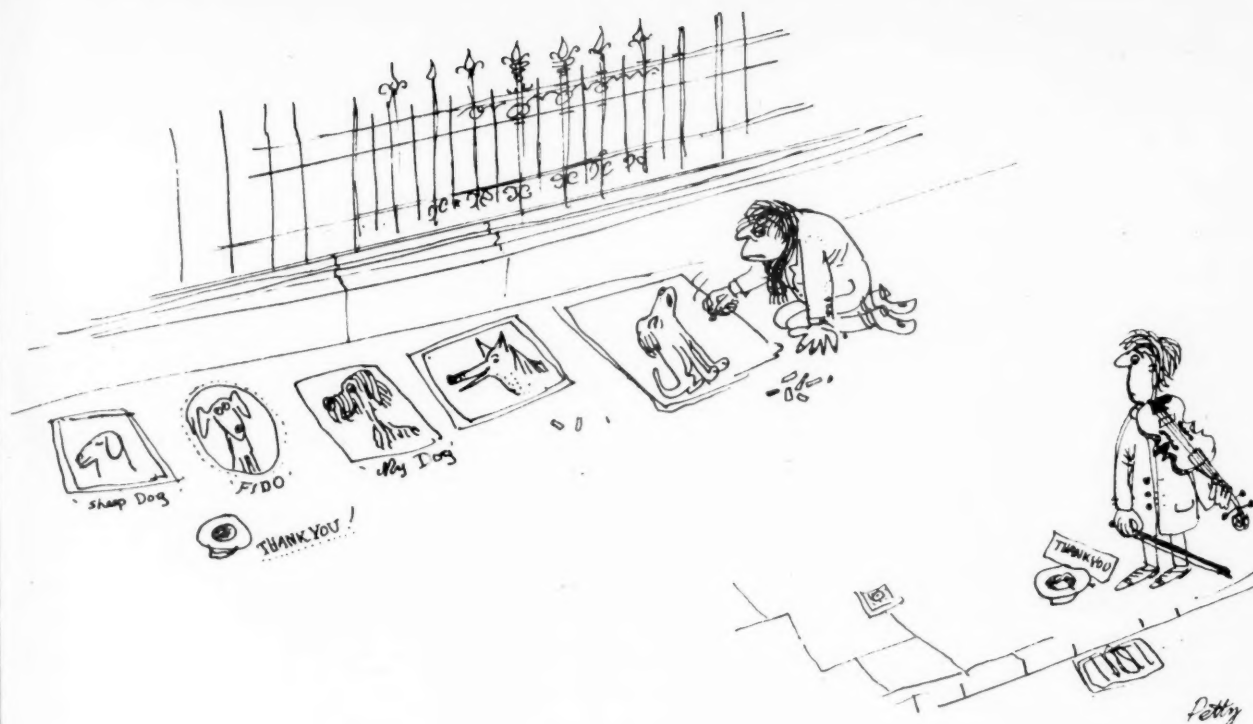


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"Instead," wrote the *Telegraph*, "of a pathless wilderness across which, once in the year, a line of camels carry merchandise, the envious but admiring ears of M. de Lesseps are destined to hear of fleets of merchantmen sailing over the conquered Sahara. Liverpool will be only fourteen days from the Upper Niger, and while a magnificent new market will be opened for British and other goods, the regeneration of Africa will be advanced as if centuries had suddenly rolled over."

By August 2 the *Daily News* had caught its breath and become even more lyrical than the *Telegraph*. "Most people will agree," wrote the *News*, in terms which unfortunately have since become all-too unsurprising, "that we live in days of vast cosmic experiments. The idea of arriving at Timbuctoo in a mail steamer is certainly rather a novel one. Admirers of Homer" (in those days many admirers of the *Daily News* also admired Homer) "will remember that the blameless Telemachus in the Odyssey was in the habit of asking visitors to his island whether they had come in a ship, as he thought it unlikely they had come by land." (The *News* at that time had plenty of space and was

thus able to develop the jest to the full.) "Residents in Timbuctoo," it tittered, "have been in the way of thinking it at least as improbable that any voyager can reach them by sea. The Timbuctoo men must prepare themselves to be astonished. The idea of making the desert blossom like a rose in this fashion is indeed sufficient to astonish an age which has made Africa an island. The scheme is the most remarkable that has ever been devised."

His Serene Highness Prince Teck and Baroness Burdett Coutts were among those who expressed their regret at being unable to attend—on July 26, 1875—a meeting at the Mansion House, under the presidency of the Lord Mayor of London, in favour of Mackenzie's big idea. Several speakers pointed out that while British commerce would certainly benefit very considerably, what every British merchant from Liverpool to Leadenhall Street was really excited about was the thought that, by means of this project, Bibles could be delivered *en masse* to the doorsteps of Timbuctoo, and the slave trade in central Africa would be abolished. (M. de Lesseps, for historico-religious reasons, was not in a position to talk about exporting the

Bible, and his Mediterranean scheme suffered accordingly in the public esteem.)

Lord Carnarvon, Secretary of State for the Colonies at the time, said the scheme "had his good wishes, because he believed that it would open up a great deal of trade and be the means of reclaiming from savagery a great number of tribes leading a most miserable life."

The Deputation, which, according to a contemporary newspaper report, had "waited on" Lord Carnarvon—it was headed by Major-General Sir Arthur Cotton—"thanked his Lordship and retired."

With a send-off like that, it does seem disappointing that from that day to this nobody has, in fact, let the ocean into the Sahara.

3 3

"STRATFORD WRANGLERS  
The next debate will be held in the Town Hall on Tuesday, 3rd December, 1957 at 7.30 p.m.

MOTION:

"THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS IS NO LONGER WITH US."

The Christmas Party will be arranged at this Meeting."

Stratford-on-Avon Herald

Sure?

# Le Cocktail

By ALISON ADBURGHAM

"DO you agree with me, Mr. Balfour, that the only excuse for a dinner party is that it should end in a committee?" asked Beatrice Webb. Mr. Balfour's reply was not recorded and can only be a matter for idle speculation. More idle still is it to speculate what Mrs. Webb, if she were alive to-day, would consider an excuse for a cocktail party.

The hard-pressed hostess has one perfectly good excuse: a cocktail party kills a great many guests with one stone. And, let's face it, a great many guests deserve killing; particularly those who are never so kind as to refuse an invitation yet always so discourteous as to groan about it afterwards. They go around bestowing their boredom on gathering after gathering, and are not above exploiting the hospitality they have received, if not enjoyed, by turning it into grist for their witty mills. If guests would only go to parties with the right attitude of mind they would find that even the dreariest people have a few redeeming vices.

The right attitude of mind is most easily achieved by wearing the right kind of clothes. That is why women, the Beatrice Webbs of this world excepted, enjoy parties more than men. And our exception most usefully proves the rule, for Mrs. Webb was not one to flatter an occasion by augmenting her jewellery, plunging her décolleté, taking off her daytime face and putting on the style. Most women *are* prepared to do all this and more; it is the men who will not blossom into early-evening flowering. They come in the clothes they have worn since morning, unless

they happen to be making use of the cocktail party as a good pull-in on the way to a dinner or a theatre. If only they would change into cocktail suits, and come sweet in the fragrance of Elizabeth Arden's toiletries for men, they would arrive feeling at least one martini above par, not only ready but willing to try conclusions in the battle-dore and shuttlecock of social badinage.

An appropriate cocktail suit could well be inspired by the smoking jacket. A pleasing although rather understated smoking jacket was shown recently at Simpson's dress show for men: maroon velvet, worn with evening Daks of hopsack . . . a dual-purpose outfit, suitable for both cocktails and dining. It was, however, on the tentative side; something in brocade would be more striking without actually breaking sartorial traditions. Indeed it would revive a tradition, for the origin of the dinner jacket *was* the brocade smoking jacket. In the late 'seventies it was the fashion at the Guards Club to dine in richly brocaded smoking jackets with brilliant silk facings and linings. One evening a Captain Thornton in the Blues appeared dressed in a black smoking jacket with black silk facings. In this he achieved just such an effective contrast as does a Mrs. Erlynne, dressed in sophisticated black, amongst a company of sweet young Lady Windermere's. Captain Thornton made such an impression on the sweet young ensigns of the Brigade that they all ordered black smoking jackets from their tailors. Soon all Society was doing the same. That is why in France the dinner jacket is known as *le smoking*.

Thus *le cocktail* could be a revival of the smoking jacket and could also be worn for dining. The black dinner jacket, although good as a foil for women's dresses, has an inhibiting effect. It is a uniform and therefore destroys individualism. Constant efforts are, in fact, made to break away from black. A case in point is the pale blue-grey dinner jacket shown at Simpson's; and also the contrasting cummerbund. The cummerbund is a comfortable, kindly, and becoming corset for the no longer athletic figure, and has the additional advantage of preventing the shirt from ruffling up. It need not be coloured: a gentlemanly example in black satin was in perfect accord with the *effortless distinction* which this Piccadilly establishment claims for its tailoring.

On the other hand, John Cavanagh, one of the two best-dressed members of the Top Twelve fashion designers, would like to see a complete metamorphosis for evening:

"If you were to ask me to dine at your house I should like to come in sapphire velvet trousers, a pale-blue silk shirt, and a peacock cummerbund. No tie; but I don't see why I shouldn't have rhinestone buttons and cuff-links. Do you think you would like me like that?"

"Very much."

"And yet I cannot come like that, because I am a dress-designer. It would be thought to be self-advertisement. If I were a barrister I shouldn't hesitate, and I should enjoy myself so much more than in a dinner jacket."

"But without a jacket, where would you put all the things men always carry in their pockets?"

"I should have a little grip—a handbag. I have always wanted one for daytime in any case, to carry my cigarettes, diary, keys and letters—all the things which spoil the suit line."

John Cavanagh's dream of little handbags is unlikely to come true. Parisian tailors have been trying very hard to persuade their clients to forgo pockets altogether and carry a *minaudière* but with small success. Over there men's clothes have been brightened up with waistcoats and vivid ribbon ties, while fur-collared overcoats and brightly





"We've got to admit it. We have the Know, they have the How."

lined cloaks are *la mode*. But for sheer dazzledom, a one-man mannequin parade in London last week cannot be overlooked. This was at Young's Dress Hire house which, like other more widely known institutions of a similar nature, offers men and women's evening clothes as well as the wedding garments which have so long been socially acceptable hirelings.

Mr. Young, having sensed "a new hunger for male elegance," presented a range of evening clothes with "romantic appeal." The show started by a young man running into the room in his underclothes; romance, one felt, had come to a most unpretty pass. But it was not a lingerie parade in spite of this parade of lingerie. The entrance was intended as symbolic of the state in which a client arrives at Young's: a dance invitation in his hand, a girl on his mind, and not a stitch to put on except what he stands up in: vest and pants, socks and suspenders. This dramatic visual aid, while commanding

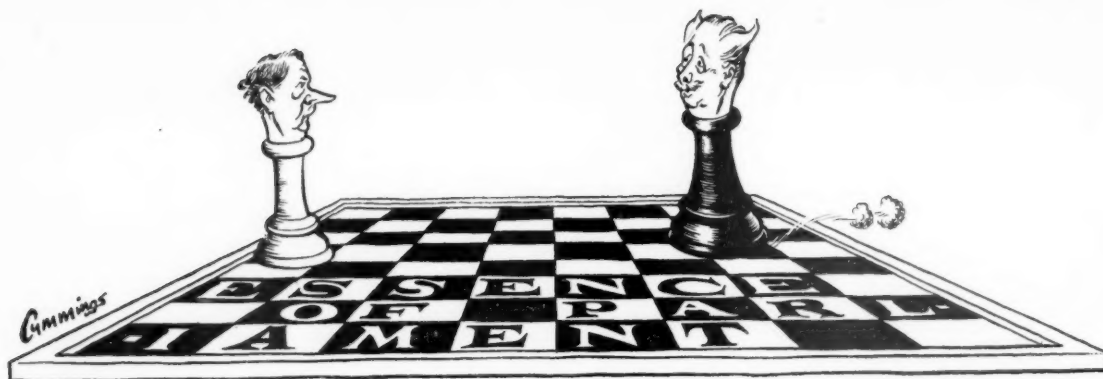
our reluctant attention, also showed clearly why no man is a hero to his valet.

Standing by to assist was a Mr. Platford—not actually a valet but introduced as a Pillar of Good Taste, which is much the same thing. He first offered a soft pleated shirt and single-breasted dinner jacket with shawl collar, and suggested a red cummerbund and matching tie; an alternative was a dinner jacket with silver brocade facings and cummerbund. A quiet smoking jacket with velvet collar and cuffs was followed by a not so quiet brocade waistcoat to wear with a black dinner jacket; and in this manner things worked up to the crescendo of a dinner jacket made of crimson brocade. Tails were more conventional, although one suit was accessorized with a Victorian waistcoat embroidered with moss roses. No one seems to have yet thought of lining the tails themselves with quilted satin—magenta, royal blue, Imperial yellow—yet how romantic they would

look as they swirled out in the waltz! Quilted scarlet satin was used to splendid effect for the lining of an evening coat with a detachable Inverness cape.

This occasion showed the way the wind is blowing; not from the West End, it is true, but we have already sensed similar currents in Piccadilly and Curzon Street. An incidental straw in the same wind is the use of Lurex gold thread interwoven into men's ties and waistcoats, even into men's sweaters and tweed jackets. A leaflet says that "Lurex has been called the gleam in fashion's eye, but for its entrance into the masculine world the gleam has become a discreet twinkle." All these things foretell a frolicsome party season. For whatever Mr. Balfour's unrecorded opinion was upon the proper sequel to a dinner party, we can depend upon it that the man who wears *le cocktail*, the man with a discreet twinkle, will make sure that none of the parties he goes to will end in a committee.





SOMETHING has got to happen some time, and so the plan was that the Local Government Bill should be the high spot of the session. It is true that just as there is, we are told, something about a soldier that is fine—fine—fine, so there is something about a Local Government official that is drab—drab—drab. Yet people have been crying out for a long time for a measure of local government reform, and, declared Mr. Henry Brooke, slapping the dispatch box, "this is it." He showed clearly that if there was any fun to be got out of block grants he was determined to get it. There were also plenty of Socialist back-benchers who had come alike to make and to see the fun. Mr. Mitchison on their Front Bench was prepared to splutter like an American sputnik. But the trouble about Mr. Bottomley, who opened for the Opposition, is that when he has a reasoned amendment to move he is incapable of moving it other than reasonably. He stated the case in an equable temper that boded ill for those who had come to see a Donnybrook.

In a very distant past two little boys called Anthony Greenwood and Reginald Maudling sat side by side on the school bench, and over the rostrum above them wagged no less a finger than that of Mr. Michael Stewart. It is my guess that that class was in general a somewhat somnolent affair but that occasionally Greenwood said to Maudling, or perhaps Maudling said to Greenwood, "You know, you can learn quite a lot from Stewart if only you can keep awake and listen." The answer was doubtless a grunt, but it is true. There is a fluency and a competence about Mr. Stewart's oratory, but, like the brook, it goes on and on with never a hint of pause and

it is very difficult to keep listening. The House found that when Mr. Stewart opened his attack on block grants on Tuesday Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd made a good answer, producing many instances of ways in which block grants would give greater freedom to the local authorities. This was in truth a bit more than Lady Megan Lloyd George had bargained for, and it was bad luck on her that as soon as she rose to speak the heating apparatus immediately to her right began emitting volumes of steam into the Chamber.



Whatever other accusations may ever have been made against Lady Megan, no one has ever accused her of not being able to let off her own steam. Yet Lady Megan, I fear, perhaps prefers charm to home-work—and why shouldn't she? It may be that answers could be found to the Minister's claims, but it was certain that she had not found them and therefore her eloquent panegyric on education was a little question-begging, for she had yet to prove that education was likely to do better under her policy than under that of the Minister. This Mr. Rippon pointed out. Mr. Rippon indeed—to do him justice—is rather good at pointing things out.

"What was the name of the evil genius," asked Mr. Henderson of Cathcart on Wednesday in a voice of thunder, who would "do something to the Highland Light Infantry which no foreign power in combat has been able to do in the past"—i.e. take its kilts off? But as the Highland Light Infantry only started to wear kilts in 1947, foreign powers have not as yet had much opportunity to debag them. Yet, while it is true that the Highland Light Infantrymen come from Glasgow and that though their hearts may be in the Highlands their legs have never been there, the reason of the Army Council and Mr. Hare why they should not wear kilts if they want—that it would be inconvenient for other soldiers who were posted to them to change out of trews—seemed singularly unconvincing.

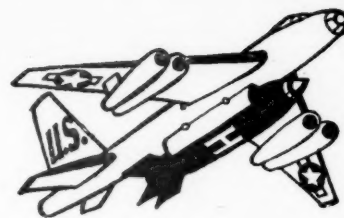
The Speaker was doubtless correct in his interpretation of the rules, but one could not help having some sympathy with Mr. Griffiths and his fellow Socialists at not being allowed on Tuesday to ask the Government for a statement of its policy on sovereignty before the

N.A.T.O. conference. The Speaker's argument was that such a question had been asked of Mr. Selwyn Lloyd a little time ago and that it is not allowed to ask the same question twice in a session. But there was something in Mr. Silverman's point that when that question was asked everyone imagined that there would be a foreign affairs debate

international agreements first and to report to the House afterwards. Indeed I do not know how a Government could ever negotiate if it had to publish the exact terms that it was going to offer before negotiations began.

Then came Mr. John Hall's private bill to ensure that patients who had private doctors got the same subsidy for their drugs as did those who had panel doctors. Mr. Hall had not got far when Mr. Fernyhough asked whether his bill did not impose a charge on public funds and was therefore out of order. Mr. Hall replied that he was proposing that the money come out of the Land Fund, which is not technically a public fund. Socialists complained that this answer was an impertinent frivolity. The Speaker at first ruled that it might be absurd but it was not out of order, but as the points of order continued to flow fast and furious he suddenly wavered and, while refusing to rule Mr. Hall out of order, appealed to him to withdraw his bill for the moment without prejudice to bringing it in again, while he (the Speaker) gave another think to the Rules of Order. Such uncertainty of mind was not at all characteristic of the Speaker, any more than it was characteristic of him on Thursday to tell Mr. Rippon that he had "said a mouthful."

The Peers on Tuesday agreed to Lord Swinton's plan to allow themselves to be given leave of absence. Lord Esher alone opposed, and he for the most extraordinary of reasons—to wit, that if peers were allowed to ask for leave of absence Bertrand Russell might ask for it. As Bertrand Russell never comes near the place anyhow, it would not seem greatly to matter whether he asked or not. Lord Lucas frankly stated the real dilemma. The object of allowing Lords to sign off was that it might be



possible to pay the rest a decent salary. But if it got out that a decent salary was going to be paid then they would be reluctant to sign off. Noble Lords, who, hereditary though they may be, were not born yesterday, were, like the Homeric gods, convulsed with unquenched laughter at this frank statement of the obvious, and it is clear that there will be a good deal of "After you, Bertie," if this signing-off comes to pass. The Socialist contribution to the debate was a curious one. Three statesmen adorned the Socialist Front Bench—Lord Lucas, Lord Stansgate and Lord Silkin. Lord Lucas explained that he believed in the hereditary principle, Lord Stansgate explained that he did not believe in it, and Lord Silkin, while not making it clear what he did believe in, stated without qualification that he did not agree with either Lord Lucas or Lord Stansgate.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS



#### PUNCH INDEX

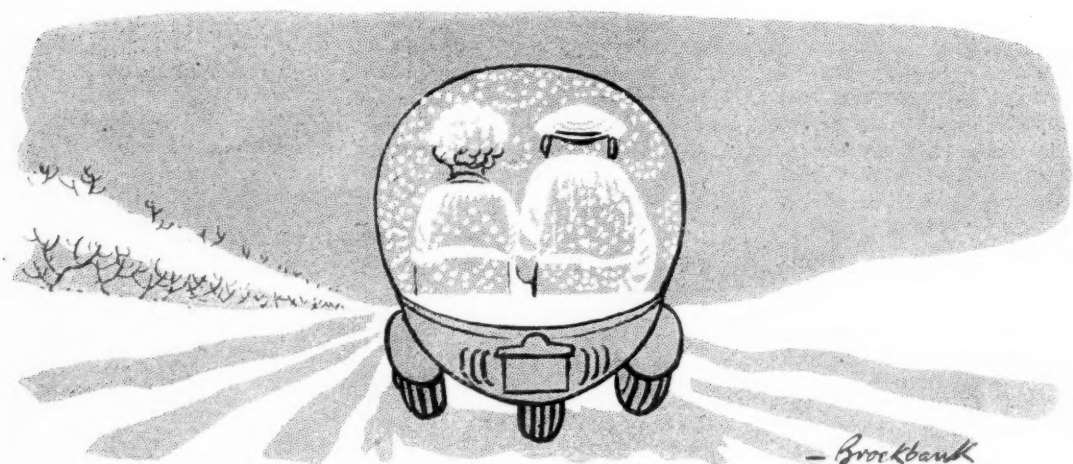
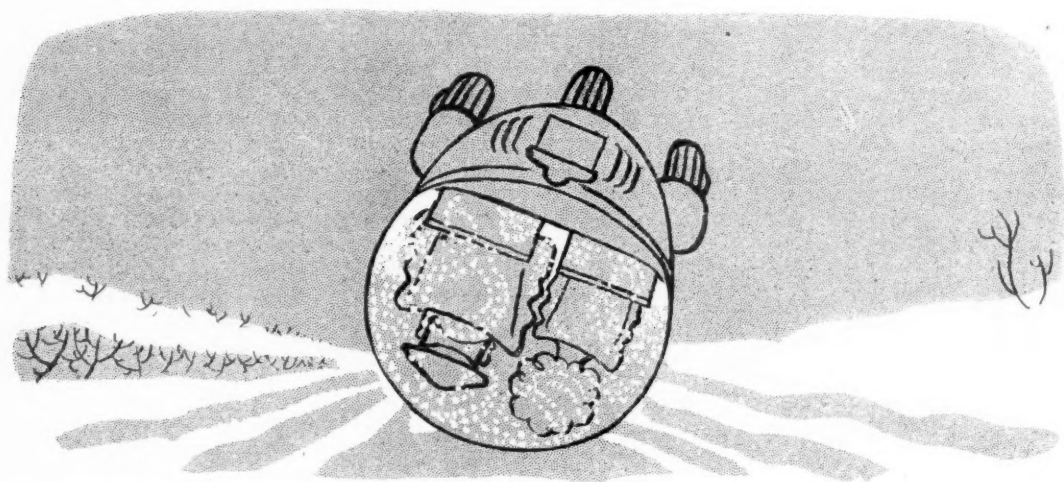
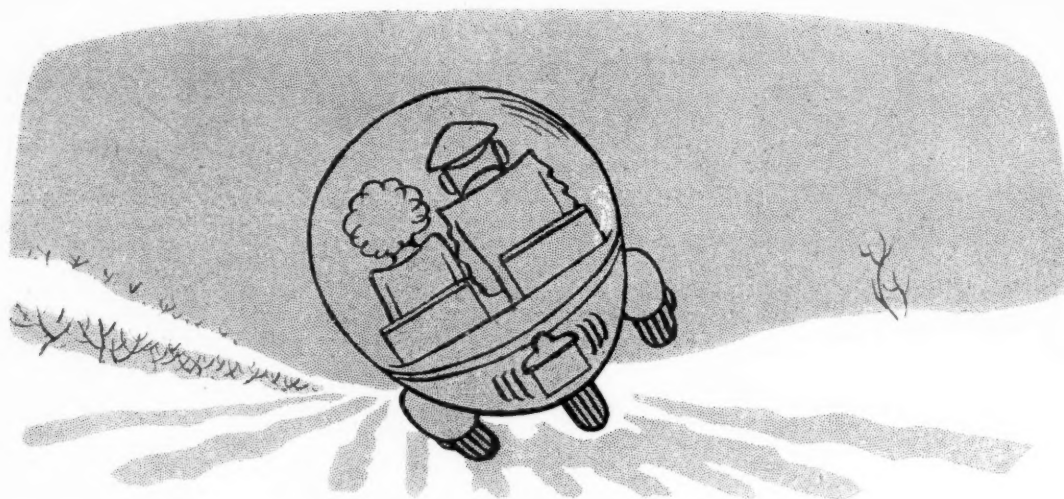
The indexes of PUNCH contributions are now issued separately. The latest, for July to December, 1957, may be obtained free on application to The Circulation Manager, PUNCH, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Readers who have their copies bound in the standard binding covers need *not* apply. The indexes are supplied with the covers.



before the conference. Besides, though no one was ungracious enough to say so, whatever the policy of the Government may be, no one supposes that Mr. Selwyn Lloyd knows it. There ought perhaps to be a special addendum to the Rules and Orders that questions to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd do not count. Mr. Macmillan sat there quietly smiling, while the Speaker and the Socialists argued the toss.

But Mr. Griffiths took the exercise back and re-wrote it and Wednesday's version was able to get past the Speaker. I do not know that it did Mr. Griffiths much good. Mr. Macmillan was not giving anything away, hardly more than Mr. Sandys on Thursday, and stood pat on the traditional doctrine that it is the duty of the Government to make its



- Brockbank

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## In the City

Dere Santa . . .

THE TV programme "Panorama" is currently playing the ever-popular game of Family Budgets. It is wonderfully exciting. Any number can play, but the usual procedure is for husband and wife to sit down with pencil and paper and a sheaf of bills, invoices and bank statements, argue amicably for a time about the allocation of their annual outlay, beg to differ about items marked "Drink," "Cosmetics" and "Children's pocket money," quarrel violently about expenditure on hot baths, newspapers, pools or bridge, and bring the game to an end with the husband promising to furnish his mate with a consolation record-player, infra-red cooker, electric toaster or new hat.

In recent family budgets published in the newspapers I have been surprised to find the item "Toys" achieving special mention. When I was a boy toys were received only at Christmas and as birthday gifts: nowadays they are considered part of the child's regular income, along with his comics, his sweets, his lien on breakfast cereal packs, and his share of TV violence. There are nearly twelve million children (under fourteen years) in the United Kingdom, and total expenditure on British toys is about £40 millions. Each child therefore, on an equalitarian analysis, is entitled to at least £3 10s.-worth of toys per annum, and toys here do not of course include such essential items as bicycles, stationery, paints and books.

The change since the war in the child's fortunes has been remarkable, for in 1938 his receipts on toys account amounted to no more than ten shillings per head all told. Inflation or no inflation, he has made spectacular inroads upon the national cake.

His lot has improved qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Gradually the somewhat stuffy "educational toys" of the Bauhaus school have developed into playthings combining purpose with

pleasure and pride of ownership. The discerning parent or uncle can now—from the products of a flourishing British toys industry—select presents of lasting value. There is still a vast amount of trash on the market—novelties with a life-span of minutes, expensive games consisting of great tracts of cardboard and a set of futile rules, plastic miniatures of extreme fragility, construction sets designed to inculcate the practice of systemized fidgeting, tin-can toys that crumple up under a baby's tread . . . You know all about them: the toy-box is full of them, a junk-yard of old crocks and scrap. But Chad Valley, Meccano, Hornby, Triang, Playcraft, Abbott and other well-known trade names (the producing companies sometimes overlap) do not often appear in this unhappy company.



## In the Woods

Christmas Trees

"MILLIONS of trees slaughtered to make a Christmas holiday"? English and European figures may be anyone's guess, but the U.S.A., though vague, seems willing to settle for about thirty million a year. There is incidentally a profitable international trade, from Canada southwards. We rough islanders put an embargo on imports, with a very few privileged exceptions (strictly conditioned as to cartage and later burning), lest pests be introduced.

A cynic might detect schizophrenic elements. For most of the year Norway spruce (which is the main Old World Christmas tree) is scornfully denounced. It is alien, gloomy and morose. Reverend amateurs of scenery object to it "goose-stepping in files across the fells" and the *Architectural Review* faults it for making spiky skylines. Yet about this season it becomes a darling Christmas tree, associated with bright lights, gaiety and gifts, so much coveted that it is stolen in large numbers.

Among foresters some heavyweight may grumble "I don't think growing

There is at present an enormous vogue for miniatures, and at least half a dozen sizeable manufacturers are cashing in on the business. These toys are sturdy and handsome, and educationally I suppose they must be considered an improvement on the lead soldiers of my day, but I am inclined to think that adults find them more enjoyable even than the children. They are collector's pieces, to be admired rather than used.

As a father I prefer wooden toys—for the under-tens—chunky things calling for few repairs, difficult to lose and easy to clear away. Chad Valley's "Work-bench" is my favourite. It has screws, nails, a vice, a hammer, a screwdriver and a spanner—all of excellent wood, and since we acquired it my own tool drawer has not once been rifled.

MAMMON

\* \* \*

ten-year-old Christmas trees is forestry." Another may reply "No, but they pay, and the money doesn't stink: they're the only means by which I can finance my oak plantations."

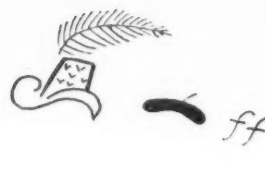
Rather too many people are now trying to make cash by growing a few thousand Christmas trees in odd corners (I have only two hundred myself), and buyers tend to become more choosy: rude expressions such as "Pipe-cleaners!" are applied to inferior trees which have too long a leading shoot, because they have grown too fast in their last year. From their end growers complain that the standard of probity normal among the dealers (never near the Lloyds' standard) declines.

Yet the Christmas-tree magic, solid or synthetic, is maintained. At this season press photographers arrange tree-burdened workmen on the banks of Thirlmere in improbable echelons: "The Christmas Tree Harvest is Here!" You may even be told how roots are cut or boiled to defeat those economical but unprincipled citizens who might plant out their ten-bob trees for possible re-use next year. Not that there's usually need for such precautions. Most tree-lovers believe in unsympathetic rough stuff. The young tree, reft from the open hill, will not be given a pot of moist soil in an open shed—which is the best bet for keeping a tree in suspended animation if it is later to be planted out; nor should it go near a fire. Normally trees are taken, dry-rooted, to stand three weeks in a heated room. Well dried and with all chance of life gone, they will burn the better on Twelfth Night.

J. D. U. WARD



# CRITICISM



## BOOKING OFFICE

### The Khivan Kove

**The True Blue: The Life and Adventures of Colonel Fred Burnaby, 1842-1885.** Michael Alexander. Hart-Davies, 30/-

THE memory of Colonel Burnaby, "soldier, traveller, politician and balloonist," ought to be kept moderately green by Tissot's charming picture in the National Portrait Gallery. It is reproduced as a coloured frontispiece to this book and shows its subject lounging on a sofa in the "blue patrols" of the Royal Horse Guards, one hand toying with a cigarette, the other resting on a pile of yellow-backed French novels, a figure of extreme elegance with the map of Asia as his background and an Arab burnous lying in the corner.

Burnaby's name has always been familiar to me because, as it happens, my grandfather knew him, but I suppose he is in general now quite forgotten, although a considerable public figure in Victorian times, famous for his feats of strength, his ascents into the air, and his travel book, *A Ride of Khiva*, which describes a journey across Central Asia.

Two earlier biographies have appeared, in 1890 and 1908. Mr. Michael Alexander has not added much to what is already known. He has, however, retold Burnaby's story with considerable verve in a mildly ironic and up-to-date tone of voice, a work well worth undertaking, though we could have done with an index, and perhaps a word or two relating Burnaby's character to modern psychology. Some very enjoyable contemporary illustrations have been included.

Mr. Alexander does not explain why Burnaby (who came from an old Leicestershire family from which, incidentally, H.M. The Queen is descended in the female line) went into the Blues, a very expensive regiment for a young man without much means. Possibly his father having been chaplain to the Duke of Cambridge—a fact not mentioned here—may have had something to do with the choice of the Household Cavalry, in which the purchase of his cornetcy alone cost £1,250. Anyway, he found himself less well off than most of the mess, and there was probably

more emphasis on his part on winning money by wagers on feats of strength than was really desirable. However, the accusation of "swindling" which Mr. Alexander has been unable to trace almost certainly refers to the story of "reindeer" being spelt "raindeer" in *Chambers's Dictionary*, a recondite piece of knowledge of which another Colonel Burnaby is said to have made somewhat unscrupulous use for betting purposes.



(From Punch, 1882)

The story is referred to in a letter from Lord Clarendon to the Duchess of Manchester, written in November 1862 when Fred Burnaby was only a subaltern. (*My Dear Duchess*, p. 204. Murray, 1956.)

Apart from his unusual strength, Burnaby was also unusually brave. To these qualities he added a taste for journalism and bohemian life. Five months' leave a year was then regarded as a reasonable Union scale in the cavalry, and Burnaby, in his spare time—among many other activities—helped to found the paper *Vanity Fair*, went as a correspondent to the Carlist War in Spain, rode to Khiva, stood for Parliament, crossed the Channel in a balloon and fought in the Sudan.

The picture of Victorian life that emerges from this book is a fascinating one. Burnaby finally commanded his

regiment, but he was not happy in this position owing to his unpopularity in having supposedly gossiped about a brother officer's clandestine love-affair. He had always suffered from "a liver," and as middle-age came on he found himself in an almost permanently depressed state "hunched up in his old chair for hours at a time, drinking innumerable cups of tea, sometimes pasting his press-cuttings into an enormous scrapbook, sometimes writing or dictating to his secretary, but more often falling into a long deep sleep."

From this *Götterdämmerung* he at last roused himself to join—in the face of official disapproval—the expedition to relieve Gordon besieged in Khartoum. His manner of going to Suakin as a private traveller perhaps suggested to Kipling the passing of the hero of *The Light that Failed*. Anyway, Burnaby, too, was killed at Abu Klea on January 17, 1885. Had he survived the battle it is probable that circumstances would have caused him to take over command and possible that Khartoum would have been relieved in time, saving the country the expense of Kitchener's expedition fourteen years later.

*Punch*, to which he had sent a contribution when a boy at Harrow, and in the pages of which he had more than once been caricatured, commemorated his death with an ode. Parliament and the Army showed their marks of respect. Some, as is usual in this country, felt better disposed towards the other side. For example, Wilfred Scawen Blunt, an acquaintance, entered in his diary: "Burnaby killed and it serves him right for he was a mere butcher, and eight other officers including young De Lisle. These English soldiers are mere murderers and I confess I would rather see them all to perdition than that a single Arab more should die."

ANTHONY POWELL

### Cardinal's Household

**The Keys of St. Peter.** Roger Peyrefitte. Secker and Warburg, 18/-

No dogma or ritual is sacred to M. Peyrefitte, who presents his morality on the Catholic hierarchy through the lively and stimulating experience of a

young French seminarist called to serve in the palatial household of a Roman cardinal whose conversation is a mixture of Wilde and Shaw. Into this Vatican stronghold no angel dares to tread, where there is room only for the cassock and the red hat. How the abbé copes with the vested vagaries of relics, indulgences, and the rules for hygiene in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, makes for entertainment and instruction. It would be wrong to give away the abbé's decision, which concludes his robustious fight 'twixt flesh and spirit, except to stress the clement of surprise.

K. D.

#### International Theatre Annual. Calder, 25/-

**A Picture History of the British Theatre.** Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson. Hulton, 30/-

The second *International Theatre Annual* has an introduction by John Osborne in which he declares war on the "British Way of Feeling," and uses "I" nineteen times in his first paragraph. More serious articles follow, giving critical accounts of the year's work in most of the world, and adding personal views on current stage problems. Harold Hobson, who edits the annual, includes a stimulating essay in which he disagrees with some of his distinguished contributors. This book is a useful record for inquiring playgoers.

Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, those tireless investigators into the past glories of the stage, have combined in an illustrated history which presents the development of our theatre so simply and vividly that no school or university library should be without it. The writing is crammed with information but very readable, and over five hundred pictures of theatres, actors and scenes from plays provide a richly assorted visual commentary.

E. O. D. K.

**The Game of Hearts:** Harriette Wilson and her Memoirs. Edited by Lesley Blanch. Gryphon Books, 28/-

Undesirable as it is to have given an imaginary title to Harriette Wilson's Memoirs, the one chosen must be admitted to be a phrase used by the lady herself. Miss Lesley Blanch contributes a good introduction, and the workaday biographical notes at the end of the book, of necessity brief, are also good. At her best the Regency *cocotte*, Harriette Wilson (1789-1846), is a first-class writer. She can indicate the characters of the men who kept her and describe incidents with great liveliness. It has been suggested that her publisher, Stockdale, ghosted the memoirs. This seems most improbable, though he or some other may have polished the sentences, or even filled in gaps when there was nothing much to say. At moments she can be silly and unconvincing, e.g. her encounter with Byron, but on the whole the stories have all the mark of personal reminiscence set down by a clever woman with a gift for expressing herself. However, her interest

in producing a readable book was no more than her desire to create an effective instrument with which to blackmail her former lovers. She makes some of her modern equivalents appear feeble figures when they get a pen in their hands.

A. P.

**Mr. Five Per Cent.** Ralph Hewins. Hutchinson, 21/-

One of the most unpleasant persons competing in the scramble for oil concessions over the last half century was the late Calouste Gulbenkian, millionaire Armenian who toadied to the powerful while spying on his own family and perfecting the technique of backsheesh and demonstrating the habits of the harem in the most exclusive circles of big business. His unsavoury life-story here related gives an impression of intense, continuous, secretive intrigues periodically surfacing as mergers, combines, pacts and percentages. Beyond denial he possessed a matchless capacity for talking himself into untold millions of money and he finally succeeded in clamping down a personal levy of a shilling in the pound on immense productions in countries of the Near and Middle East that he had never even visited.

This book is valuable for its account of the early days of Caucasian oil and its glimpses of Armenian history, but it is hopelessly vague in many essential details. Emphatically it will not teach any rash speculator how to make a fortune by dabbling in oil.

C. C. P.

**Mrs. Bessie Braddock, M.P.** Millie Toole. Robert Hale, 18/-

Our tradition is that left-wing hot-heads turn out to have hearts of gold, like James Maxton. Can Mrs. Braddock be an exception? For here is Millie Toole devoting a whole book to a portrait that represents her simply as bigoted, abusive and litigious. The explanation seems to be that Miss Toole admires these qualities. She gleefully lavishes them—and worse—on most of the Liverpool revolutionaries who people her background, and even delights to pin on some of them conduct as near dishonesty as makes no difference, adding from time to time the appalling libel that this is what the Liverpool workers are like.

Readers who cannot join in the admiration but who believe that Mrs. Braddock must have other, less nasty, sides to her must wait until she attracts the attention of a less committed biographer.

B. A. Y.

**The Testimony of the Spade.** Geoffrey Bibby. Collins, 30/-

This companion volume to Ceram's *Gods, Graves and Scholars* uses its method of teaching ancient history by describing the process of its reconstruction. The first book had a southern aspect. Mr. Bibby is concerned with the north, which he thinks has been seen too much through Hellenized eyes. He copes very



"What did you expect? Sabrina?"

efficiently with a period that stretches from Eoliths to Viking Burials and with developments in archaeology extending from the recognition of the existence of prehistoric man to the use of radioactive carbon 14 in dating.

Usually Mr. Bibby is as elegantly and enthusiastically lucid as Collingwood; but from time to time he turns himself for a sentence or two into an old-fashioned journalist, frenziedly personalizing archaeologists or writing silly sentences of the "They too had their joys and fears" type. In the next edition there should be several time-charts, not merely one that ends with Magdalenian Man. References to aerial photography and the distribution-map are only incidental. Each deserves a paragraph to itself.

R. G. G. P.

#### BOOKS BY PUNCH PEOPLE

Nicolas Bentley. *How Can You Bear to be Human?* André Deutsch, 12/6.

Russell Brockbank. *The Brockbank Omnibus.* Perpetua, 21/-.

Anthony Carson. *A Train to Taragona.* Methuen, 15/-.

Claud Cockburn (with illustrations by Michael folkes). *Aspects of English History.* MacGibbon and Kee, 15/-.

Tom Girtin. *Come Landlord!* Hutchinson, 15/-.

Gerard Hoffnung. *The Hoffnung Companion to Music.* Dobson Putnams, 4/6.

Christopher Hollis and Michael Cummings. *The Ayes and the Noes.* Macdonald and Co., 8/6.

David Langdon. *Puff and Wuff Adventure Book.* Wingate, 7/6.



David Langdon. *A Banger for a Monkey*. Wingate, 9/6.

Geoffrey Lincoln. *No Moaning of the Bar*. Geoffrey Bles, 11/6.

Ronald Searle. *Paris Sketchbook*. Perpetua, 21/-.

E. H. Shepard. *Drawn from Memory*. Methuen, 21/-.

Norman Thelwell. *Angels on Horseback*. Methuen, 15/-.

G. H. Vallins. *After a Manner*. Epworth Press, 8/6.

P. G. Wodehouse. *Over Seventy*. Herbert Jenkins, 16/-.

## AT THE PLAY

*The Rape of the Belt*  
(PICCADILLY)

*Be My Guest!*

(WINTER GARDEN)

*Dinner With the Family*  
(NEW)

I HAVE always felt the gallants of classical mythology were as sticky a crew as our own Arthur and all the other Heroes with a capital H, and it was therefore a special pleasure to find that in *The Rape of the Belt* Benn Levy had drawn a new and deadly bead on that tiresome couple of trouble-shooters, Heracles and Theseus.

They come, two superior males

immensely sure of themselves, to perform the ninth labour, of wresting the sacred belt from the Queen of the Amazons; by force, which is all they understand. Very quickly they are out of their depth. The Queen meets their blustering demands as a gentle and patient hostess might meet the impertinence of two gauche small boys. Hinting delicately that the Greeks are nothing but barbarians with an inferiority complex which has to be assuaged by conquest, she explains how far the Amazons have evolved from all that. They live in perfect peace and amity, with good manners long since taken for granted. The only men on their island are kept in a hygienic stud-farm; boys are drowned at birth; as for the legend of their martial prowess, they have never lost a battle simply because they have taken care never to fight one.

The Queen, played with the most melting authority by Constance Cummings, shares her two-seater throne with her sister Hippolyte, a lazy girl whose portfolios of Foreign Affairs and Defence leave her ample time for sleep. Hospitable hostesses, these two find the masculine pretensions of their visitors tremendously amusing. The more courteously they are treated, the bigger fools Heracles and Theseus appear. All this makes for a delightfully witty first act.

The proceedings are watched by Hera and Zeus, pipe-clayed and wrangling domestically from two little windows on either side of the stage. Zeus is full of paternal pride in his muscular boy, while Hera, sick to death of male antics, is furiously anxious lest the girls give in. Once the initial satire on the relations of men and women has run its first course Mr. Levy has to fall back on action. The play is still funny, and the actors miss nothing in its situations, but the wit is thinner. As burglars the intruders fail miserably, but the Queen is falling dangerously in love with Heracles. At this point Hera in desperation takes possession of the idle Hippolyte and turns her into the Amazon of legend, who mobilizes for war with frightening energy. Hippolyte is taken by Kay Hammond. She has not had so good a part for years, and she manages the switch in character deliciously, passing smartly from a yawning lisp to the ferocious barking of warlike orders. In the end, of course, Zeus takes a hand. The war peters out in pantomime and love is, in a way, triumphant.

The slight fading from the first act is not serious. Mr. Levy's comedy is civilized and charming, and not even Heracles could steal it from the Piccadilly for a long time. Seeming about eight feet high, he is played splendidly by John Clements, who mixes a stiff Greek pride with enough intelligence to grasp that heroism may be faintly silly. Richard Attenborough's Theseus is in excellent contrast, a nice little hearty from a cavalry mess. In their niches above, Veronica Turleigh and Nicholas Hannen are fully Olympian and yet might be arguing over a breakfast table in Hampshire, Mr. Hannen even contributing a touching little song. Mr. Clements' production and Malcolm Price's decorations put a timeless aspect on the whole evening.

How so amiably moronic a piece as *Be My Guest!* ever arrived on the London stage must remain a great wonder. It has a sort of plot, of a pretty widow who innocently lets her house to a gentleman bank-robber, "borrows" some of his swag while he is in prison, and is black-mailed into assisting in his unsuccessful getaway; but very soon the plot is almost sunk in padding. Mother and daughter are prepared to gossip endlessly over cups of soup, a lover from America provides a long proposal scene, for no good reason an aunt keeps dropping in just to be unpleasant. If the football scores and a relay from the Festival Hall had been included they could not have driven the tension any lower. And we believe least of all in the widow, for who can imagine anyone so nice as Jane Baxter helping herself to stolen notes? She and Dennis Price and Peter Sallis are thrown away on this singularly unprofitable evening.



(The Rape of the Belt)

Heracles—JOHN CLEMENTS

Theseus—RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH

When it was at Oxford two months

ago I reviewed Anouilh's *Dinner With the Family* (*Le Rendez-vous de Senlis*), and I am very glad it has come to London. The first act is not only brilliantly amusing but played with the utmost delicacy by John Justin, Lally Bowers, Alan MacNaughtan and Gwen Nelson; the bubble is then broken, and the mood switches to a bitter contrast between squalor and innocence. Standards both of writing and acting fall a little, though Jill Bennett matches the quality of the first-act team. I still think Frank Hauser's production is marred by a much too farcical butler, but taken as a whole this play, sympathetically translated by Edward Owen Marsh, is too interesting to miss.

#### Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

John Gielgud's superb Prospero in *The Tempest* (Drury Lane—11/12/57). *Florescing Cherry* (Haymarket—27/11/57), a modern domestic tragedy. *Roar Like a Dove* (Phoenix—2/10/57), outrageous adult comedy. ERIC KEOWN

### AT THE PICTURES

#### *The Pajama Game* *Just My Luck*

I ENJOYED *The Pajama Game* (Directors: George Abbott and Stanley Donen) very much indeed: a first-rate colour musical, gay, funny, tuneful, charming and extremely well done. I make this uncompromising statement to begin with because at some films these days I get the impression that many people in even a press-show audience, which should be on the alert to appreciate excellence of whatever kind, tend to sit grimly refusing to be entertained, holding out with surly determination against things that should make them laugh or otherwise give them pleasure, until the effort becomes too great and the rock of their resistance cracks—and then afterwards feeling ashamed to admit their enjoyment. It is literally as if they *resent* the fact that something is brilliantly and expertly done.

Well, perhaps this is too fanciful a thought and I am being unjust. This picture is no great work of classical importance and it reveals no mighty truth, but it is wonderfully good entertainment, a stimulating experience to see, and it is made by all concerned with captivating skill. I want to make the fact known.

I didn't see the stage production, and I didn't read the novel, but I insist that both these are irrelevant in judging the film. This stands on its merits as a comedy about the workers in a pyjama factory, told in musical-film terms: that is, music is used as only the film can use it. On the stage, music can make its effect by synchronizing with action; but in a film, besides doing that, the music can change key on, or unexpectedly



Gladys—CAROL HANEY

[*The Pajama Game*]

sharpen, a note that synchronizes with a new shot, a new angle, often a new colour. This sort of thing adds enormously to one's satisfaction: it enriches the moment of pleasure by making it appreciable by more of the senses at once.

The story? How much do you really care about the story? The principals are the new superintendent of the factory (John Raitt) and the girl endearingly known as "the grievance committee" (Doris Day); they are on opposite sides because she feels deeply about her job and wants the workers to have their seven-and-a-half-cents-an-hour rise, or raise, and he has to oppose it on behalf of the management—but all comes right in the end. The point of the whole thing is the way the work (and the play) of the place is presented in music and comedy. There are brilliant, intensely pleasing and stimulating concerted numbers set both among the factory machines and in the open air at the annual picnic ("Once-a-Year Day"), which is visually as otherwise delightful. There is no room to mention half the people who deserve mention, but at least I must get in a reference to Carol Haney, a superlative comedienne. And above all, there is that loading of every moment with miscellaneous pleasure. If you complain that there's too much to take in at once, that's a reason for seeing the thing again. When I can, I shall.

The ominous words "through a series of misunderstandings" in the synopsis of the new Norman Wisdom comedy *Just My Luck* (Director: John Paddy Carstairs) made me fear the worst, but I was very agreeably surprised. In outline this may be the sort of manufactured, contrived British effort we have

long been used to: the little accident-prone man who manages at last, more or less by accident, to succeed and win his girl. But here, almost for the first time in this sort of picture, we have genuine observation, genuine character, genuine invention among the subsidiary comic incident. There are sequences of near-slapstick (the cinema audience, where little Norman at last finds himself almost throttling his girl with the arm holding his drinking-straw, and winds up on the floor dubiously looking at the neighbouring lady's bare foot with the shoe beside it), and there are things that are in essence revue-sketches (his excellent trouble with the telephone, just a fraction worse than the sort of thing we have all experienced)—but they are placed in the story, there is a reason for them, they are not laboured. It is very welcome indeed to find a popular British comedian being properly used in a funny film, and not merely being given an obvious, ordinary frame for what everybody has seen him do before.

#### Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

An excellent new one in London is *Barnacle Bill*, with Alec Guinness, and *The Careless Years* is good; more of these next week. The two French ones *He Who Must Die* (6/11/57)—in its last days—and René Clair's *Porte des Lilas* (13/11/57) are still available, and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (17/7/57). *Stopover Tokyo* (11/12/57) is a handsome well-made thriller.

Not one of the releases was reviewed here. Disney's *Johnny Tremain* is simple rousing stuff for the young, in the same key as *Davy Crockett*.

RICHARD MALLETT



## ON THE AIR

## Can I Help You?

ONE way and another the B.B.C. offers its listeners a fair amount of practical advice in the course of a week. Provided that you can find your way around *Radio Times* (don't forget to vote in the paper's planning plebiscite) you can pick up useful hints on gardening, cooking, Stock Market trends, angling, child welfare, shopping, motoring and many other matters. Network Three has weekly programmes on "Parents and Children," stamp-collecting, amateur theatricals, "In Your Garden" and "Motoring and the Motorist"; the Home Service, every Friday, has a "bulletin of food news to guide the household shopper," and the Light has a weekly chat on legal and other affairs by Dudley Perkins . . .

Sorry, it's the Home Service that now houses this excellent item "Can I Help You?"—on Sunday afternoons. The switch in wave-length is reasonable, I suppose, but thousands of adherents to the Light will miss Uncle Perkins' call on Saturday night. There was something peculiarly old-fashioned and Sam Smiles-ish about these fifteen minutes of cheerful, sympathetic, explicit advice sandwiched between the frolics and follies of the Saturnalian feast. And the programme was very popular. But there it is—Saturday on the Light has to compete with Saturday on B.B.C. and commercial television, and minority interests and sentimental attachments have not much chance in the battle of the ratings. I only hope that "Can I Help You?" addicts will become its fellow travellers.



More important is the question of the B.B.C.'s future policy on all matters of "practical advice" programmes. There has been a marked tendency recently to deal with subjects on the fringe of the human dilemma, with psychiatric and psychological problems relying for their wide appeal on the revelation of unsavoury detail and near-the-knuckle home truths. Steam radio and TV deal increasingly with the problems of social misfits, and do so wisely and usefully, but they also dabble increasingly in the heart-throb, melodrama of mere eccentricity.

To some extent this theatrical social surgery has been allowed to replace programmes dealing with the day-to-day doubts and difficulties of the normal, majority listener, and this, in my view, is a mistake. Even the least complicated of individuals finds life in Britain pretty complicated to-day, and great injustice

and unhappiness is caused by the failure of the bewildering number of "authorities" with one foot inside the front door (the "them" of popular parlance) to explain themselves efficiently and effectively and to make the individual fully aware of his rights, duties, opportunities and dangers.

Many people are worried about the education of their children, about the eleven-plus, the "O" and "A" level examination system, the relative merits of various types of schools, the cost of university education, means tests and so on. About their duties as parents—how, when and where to apply for forms, particulars, regulations and advice. Most people simply do not know the facts, and there is as yet no authority charged with the task

of improving public relations in this field.

Then, jobs. Half our troubles on the economic front are caused by the immobility of labour, and the immobility is very largely due to ignorance. Where are new jobs available? What wages do they pay? What housing, education and social amenities are available in new employment areas? Why doesn't the B.B.C. run its own national employment bureau?

Shopping. Wouldn't a regular information service on the air help to stabilize prices, get rid of over-charging and clean up the worst of the hire-purchase rackets? Wouldn't a series on standards (there is in existence a Consumer Advisory Council) help the housewife to make a better and more enjoyable job of her weekly shopping?

Taxation, insurance, pensions, health service matters—useful topics abound. Why not use them?

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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